

Step 1: Become a Recognized Medicare Provider



"I remember the first time I thought about applying for MNT reimbursement.... I learned a lot about the process and realized that it is not as simple as it first seemed."

— Cecilia Butler, MS, RD, CDE
Santa Fe IHS

The first step in obtaining MNT reimbursement is to enroll to *become a recognized Medicare provider* if you are not already one. To become a recognized Medicare provider, you will need to apply for a Medicare provider identification number (PIN). A Medicare PIN is needed to bill for MNT reimbursement and identifies the RD as a recognized, qualified Medicare provider.

The CMS will soon require each provider to obtain a national provider identifier (NPI), which will replace the Medicare PIN. The transition to the NPI will be complete in May 2007. In the interim, the CMS systems will accept the existing Medicare PIN, but providers will be responsible for applying for their new NPI. You must be enrolled in the Medicare program before obtaining the NPI. For additional information, to complete an NPI application, and to access educational tools, visit www.cms.hhs.gov/apps/np/01_overview.asp.

What are the criteria for applying to become a recognized Medicare provider?

You must meet the following criteria to apply to become a recognized Medicare provider:

- Bachelor degree or advanced degree in nutrition or dietetics.
- Completion of at least 900 hours of supervised dietetics practice under the supervision of an RD.
- License or certification as an RD or nutrition professional by the state in which the services are provided. If you practice in a state that does not provide licensure or certification, you can meet this requirement if the Commission on Dietetic Registration recognizes you as an RD, or if you met the first two bullets of this section. This requirement applies to RDs employed or contracted by IHS, Tribal, or



urban Indian health systems. For federal employees, if you are a licensed RD and hold a license from a state different from the one in which you work, you can continue to hold any state license for which you have already been accepted.

- RD credential with the Commission on Dietetic Registration. This credential provides proof that education and experience requirements have been met.
- Grandfathers dietitians or nutritional professionals license or certification as of December 21, 2000, if applicable.

How do I become a recognized Medicare provider?

To become a recognized Medicare provider, you will need to complete **CMS Form 855I “Medicare Federal Health Care Provider/Supplier Enrollment Application”**. Along with the form, you will need to submit supporting documentation, such as your RD registration number and a copy of your state license or certification.

You will generally be enrolled as a Medicare provider within 60 days of the Medicare carrier’s receipt of your application. This may take longer if your application is incomplete. You can contact the Medicare carrier to check the status of your enrollment if more than two months have passed since you submitted your application and you have not yet received your Medicare PIN.

You may need to complete other forms depending on your practice setting and employment relationship. For example, you may need to complete **CMS Form 855R “Medicare Federal Care Reassignment of Benefits Application”** to reassign Medicare payment back to the health care facility in which you provide services. This form is needed when you are employed or contracted by a facility that will submit the MNT service claims on your behalf and collect payment for your services.

Your billing department may have these forms on hand. You can also obtain the forms at the CMS website: www.cms.hhs.gov/home/medicare.asp (click on “Medicare”, click on “CMS Forms” under “Medicare–General Information”, and select “CMS Forms” on the sidebar).

